

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 42-43, 48-50, and 54-68 are pending in the application, with 42, 48, and 54 being the independent claims. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103

Claims 42, 48, 50, 54-58, and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and (e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,499,216 to Fjeistad ("Fjeistad"). Claims 42, 43, 48-50, and 54-68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fjeistad.

At least the 102(a and e) and 103(a) rejections of claims 42, 48, and 54 using Fjeistad, as applied by the Examiner, are improper. The earliest effective date (i.e., the 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) date) for Fjeistad is September 24, 1999. The instant application is a divisional of 08/802,054, filed 2/17/97. Thus, the Fjeistad reference is not available as a proper reference because the effective priority date of the instant application, February 17, 1997, is before the effective date of Fjeistad, September 24, 1999.

Also, Fjeistad fails to teach the limitations found in the claims depending from these claims, claims 43, 49-50, and 55-68. The Examiner has failed to make a prima facie case of obviousness because most of these claim's limitations were not explicitly rejected by the Examiner. It appears the Examiner only explicitly rejected the independent claims.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.


Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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